

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT TODAY

Herefordshire Council's Historic Environment Newsletter

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Making plans

This is a time of year when all of us are making plans, be it the Christmas tour of friends and relations, or the well-oiled military machine known as the Christmas lunch. This issue of Historic Environment Today focuses on plans relating to the archaeological resource in Herefordshire.

Plans are an important element to all archaeological work as they define the way forward in conserving and recording our archaeological resource through agreed actions. They feature at many levels from the over-arching plans such as the forthcoming Herefordshire Archaeology Strategy to the site-specific management plan. This issue introduces the range of different plans that the service here is involved in.

This issue also includes news item on a fish weir near Cloddock and we are also pleased to hear of the formation of another heritage group, *Garway Heritage Group* in the south of the County.

To finish this editorial I would, on behalf of Herefordshire Archaeology, like to wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

*Neil Rimmington, Countryside Adviser
(Archaeology) and Issue Editor*

Our future inheritance

Is the title for the upcoming *Herefordshire Archaeology Strategy*, 2008-11. This four-page document, and its accompanying *Strategic Plan*, are currently in draft form and are being prepared for public consultation early in 2008. The *Strategy* is a planning document outlining the priorities for what promises to be a period of considerable change affecting both local government and the historic environment sector. It specifies what

impact Heritage Protection Reform is likely to have in Herefordshire, and identifies what the service can do to further the wider strategic goals of support for Herefordshire's communities in planning, conservation, development, training and promotion.

"...The Strategic Plan puts flesh on the strategy bones..."

The *Strategic Plan* puts flesh on the strategy bones, identifying targets for the next period through into 2011 and noting how the service itself will adapt to meet changing goals and circumstances. The two strategy documents are supported by a draft *Conservation Agenda* and draft *Research Agenda* that will form an integral part of the consultation.

Keith Ray, County Archaeologist

Something fishy from the Monnow

During the early part of the year of 2007, the River Monnow substantially shifted its course exposing the remains of a fish weir.



Fish Weir on River Monnow, near Cloddock

Inside: Monument Management Plans ♦ Planning for the SMR ♦ ESG

The structure is actually two fish weirs built in series on the former watercourse. Each fish weir is visible as two lines of alder posts that taper towards each other at the downstream end. When in operation a basket trap would have been placed at the downstream end to trap the fish.

Combined with the remains of a weir 50m upstream these structures point to a period when the River Monnow was far more managed than it is today.

*Neil Rimmington, Countryside Adviser
(Archaeology)*

Back to the future on the Rotherwas industrial estate

Recent interest in the history of Rotherwas has inevitably focused on the discovery of the ancient and enigmatic 'Rotherwas Ribbon'. However, other aspects of Rotherwas's past, including Rotherwas House (a demolished stately home) and the massive 20th century munitions factory (the site of which is now occupied by the Industrial Estate) are equally important and fascinating components of the overall Rotherwas 'story'.



The historic munitions factory at Rotherwas

Herefordshire Council's 'Rotherwas Futures' project is now providing opportunities to further assess this wider heritage. Rotherwas Futures is implementing the further economic development of the Industrial Estate. As part of this process, Herefordshire Archaeology has been commissioned to review the known 'historic assets' that exist within the Industrial Estate.

A major part of the study will focus on the surviving buildings and infrastructure of the Royal Ordnance Factory. The remaining structures provide important archaeological evidence of how the factory was built and operated. They are also an evocative reminder of a time when Britain

was under imminent threat of invasion, and the Rotherwas Ordnance Factory was a key national defence facility employing thousands of local people.

The study will also re-assess the potential for pre 20th century archaeological remains within the site. Before the building of the munitions factory, the gardens and planned landscape around Rotherwas House dominated the local landscape. Moreover, recent prehistoric finds in the vicinity (including the Rotherwas Ribbon) have emphasised that Rotherwas was also an important area during Neolithic and Bronze Age times.

The management study will help ensure that the latest chapter in Rotherwas's history – the implementation of Rotherwas Futures – embodies understanding, conservation and celebration of the extraordinary past of the locality.

Ian Bapty, Senior Project Archaeologist

Monument management plans

Monument management plans are prepared to guide the conservation of some of Herefordshire's nationally important monuments, through schemes such as Natural England's Environmental Stewardship Scheme. These plans are designed to analyse the conservation goals for an archaeological site within an understanding of its ecological interests and land management, and then to set out balanced management aims for the future.

This approach is applicable to those nationally important monuments where there are a number of issues to be resolved and therefore it is normally our larger monuments, such as hillforts and castle sites where monument management plans are best applied. For the historic environment professional and for the owner these plans are of immense benefit as they lay out a timetable for the enhanced conservation of the monument that has been agreed by all parties.

This year the service has been working alongside the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) on the development of management plans for four Scheduled Monuments – *Risbury Camp* (picture on page 3), *Rowlestone Motte*, *Old Castleton Motte and Bailey* and a *Moated Site near Checkley*. More plans are in the pipeline for the forthcoming year.

Neil Rimmington, Countryside Adviser (Arch)

Planning for the SMR

Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) is a computerised database of the known archaeological sites and historic buildings in the county, complemented by collections of archive information, aerial photographs, maps, books and other items. Most of the information it contains is available to the public via our website (www.smr.herefordshire.gov.uk), and the archive collections can be inspected by appointment to the SMR office in the Town Hall, Hereford. Since 1998, when it was separated from the previous Hereford and Worcester SMR following local government reorganisation, the SMR has been an integral part of Herefordshire Archaeology.

Between September 2006 and April 2007, the job-share SMR Officers, Lucie Dingwall and Melissa Seddon, carried out an audit of all aspects of the SMR collections, accommodation, equipment and working practices. The resulting report, which was submitted to English Heritage for review and comment, has been used to draw up a three-year development plan for the SMR. This plan will tie in with the new Herefordshire Archaeology Strategic Plan for 2008-10.



Risbury Camp (© Chris Musson HAAS 05-CN-149)

Successful completion of the various actions identified in the development plan will lead to compliance with national benchmark standards for SMRs, and will see the development of the SMR into a wider-ranging Historic Environment Record (HER) by late 2009 or early 2010. This development will help Herefordshire Archaeology to meet the new challenges of the forthcoming Heritage Protection Act. Major tasks identified in the Development Plan include the migration of

the SMR databases (currently held on Microsoft Access software) to the purpose-designed Exegesis HBSMR software, the migration of the present SMR website to a specially designed microsite within the main Herefordshire Council website, various data cleaning and enhancement exercises, and the clearing of a backlog of unentered data. A move to alternative office accommodation is also possible. English Heritage has endorsed both the audit and the development plan, and it is hoped that the Council will adopt them during 2008.

Melissa Seddon, SMR Officer (job share)

Guiding plans: Archaeology SPDs

Planning (as in 'Town and Country Planning') is changing. Instead of major local plan documents like the *Unitary Development Plan* for Herefordshire that sets out the Council's policies in detail, and provides a 'blueprint' for land allocations for development, there will be a portfolio of documents contributing to the *Local Development Framework*. This will draw upon the extant UDP policies after 2011 where these still mesh with government policy, but will comprise a portfolio of documents that articulate local policy and strategic planning in a variety of ways. One such way will be through *Supplementary Planning Documents* (SPDs) that provide local guidance upon specific locations or issues.

Examples of SPDs currently in process include one for the Edgar Street Grid and another for polytunnels. Herefordshire Archaeology staff are currently preparing two more that will go to public consultation early in 2008. One of these is for Archaeology and Development, while the other is for Historic Landscapes. These documents give the background to the Council's policies for these aspects of planning, and set out how they are implemented. This means for instance that what is explained is not only the rationale for the attachment of different kinds of archaeological condition to planning permissions, but also what to do to discharge them.

Peter Dorling, Senior Projects Archaeologist

ESG: Planning for regeneration

With significant progress having been made recently by ESG Herefordshire Ltd towards the genesis of the new 'retail quarter' for Hereford, it is perhaps timely to summarise the archaeological planning being undertaken. The existing data has been re-assessed and supplemented by Dr Nigel Baker of Herefordshire Archaeology, and the most significant areas of the retail quarter have been subject to preliminary archaeological evaluation, which has highlighted a number of areas of archaeological potential. Further evaluation is being planned for other locations within the retail quarter, and along the proposed new link road from Commercial Road to Edgar Street. Discussions are also underway regarding the large-scale flood alleviation works that will be required as part of the ESG 'package', and how to deal with any archaeological matters arising.



Blackfriars: an oasis of calm

From a historic environment perspective, the two most challenging aspects to wholesale development of the area are understanding and conserving the ancient Blackfriars precinct which sits at its heart, and ensuring the protection and enhancement of Hereford's remarkable city walls, adjacent to the Grid. With this in mind, projects are being considered that will properly analyse and characterise these features and their environs. A more general need has been identified to produce a comprehensive archaeological masterplan for the Grid area, which would in the first instance reflect on the issues affecting the retail quarter, but then extend outwards to include the Grid in its entirety.

Julian Cotton, Archaeological Adviser

The Garway Heritage Group

Following on from their successful Local Heritage Initiative project *Garway Hill through the Ages* and recent book launch, the group at Garway has now formed themselves into the *Garway Heritage Group*. Information on the groups activities and contacts can be found on their website www.garway.org.uk.

Forthcoming events

Wednesday 16th January: Ewyas Harold Historic Landscape Walk

Wednesday 13th February: Queenswood, Upton Bishop Landscape Walk

Wednesday 12th March: Bredenbury Landscape Walk

Wednesday 15th April: Huntsham Hill Landscape Walk

Contact number for Herefordshire Archaeology

To book places for walks and for general enquiries, contact Jacky Denovan on e-mail at archaeologists@herefordshire.gov.uk or telephone 01432 260470.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

